

Good Friday  
The Passion According to St. John by J. S. Bach  
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*Lord, our Redeemer  
Give us sight that in the darkest, Cruellest night  
your glory shall we see.  
Show us that by thy passion done. . .  
That we shall see your glory. Amen*

It wasn't supposed to work out this way. It wasn't supposed to end like this.

He said, "For this I was born and into the world have come that to the truth I should bear witness."

In the Passion according to St. John Jesus is not the victim. Jesus is in charge. As Jesus is crucified he announces, "for this I was born." Jesus is as serene on his cross as royalty upon their throne. Glory does not follow all this unpleasant passion. This passion *is* his glory.<sup>1</sup>

It certainly wasn't supposed to end implicating us. As W. H. Auden slowly became a Christian, he wrote, Jesus "fulfills none of my dreams, because he is in every respect the opposite of what he would be if I could have made him in my own image."<sup>2</sup> Then it dawns on Auden what this implies in this icy comment, ". . . [I]f a Christian is asked: 'Why Jesus and not Socrates or Buddha or Confucius or Mahomet?' perhaps all he can say is: 'None of the others arouse *all* sides of my being to cry "Crucify Him"'"<sup>3</sup>

As he is crucified, he said, "For this I was born."

And then, "It is fulfilled."

It wasn't supposed to work out this way.

Or, in some darkly opaque way through which you and I shall never pierce, maybe this is *exactly* how it was to work out.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrisville, commenting on Rudolf Bultmann: ". . . Jesus' exaltation on the cross is his 'enthronement,' not only is his exaltation situated in the crucifixion, but the cross is in a certain sense projected into glory." Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mrrena.com/2002/auden2.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Auden, *The Complete Works of W.H. Auden: Prose: Volume II. 1939-1948*, ed. by Edward Mendelson (Princeton: University Press, 2002), p. 197.